

HYGIENE

515 Unless subject to taboos, both sexes bathe at least once a day, the younger people twice or three times. If all the residents are assembled during the *vu'te'* period, the younger generation take their first bath jointly before sunrise as soon as the youths' and maidens' dance in the plaza abruptly comes to a stop. At that moment all dash toward the brook, including the girls, who have quickly fetched their gourd bottles. Men and women of mature age are also in the habit of joining, but those really old rarely come, if at all. The girls go directly upstream, take up a position counter to the current, and fill their vessels, everyone laughing and splashing about. At this early hour the air is piercing cold on the steppe, and precisely before sunrise a gust of wind is likely to make the bathers shiver as they get out of their bath. In order to get warm everybody rushes up the slope toward the village. But the members of whatever festive organizations happen to be functioning assemble halfway to the settlement around fires, for which they have already brought along dry palm grass. Only after having warmed themselves they run shouting, each society separately, into the village, where each occupies its appropriate site in the plaza.

During the day they generally bathe again, performing their ablutions by rubbing themselves with their hands or with leaves. After nightfall they avoid entering the water. The hair, as noted, is washed by rubbing it between the palms. Notwithstanding their efforts the skin rarely appears wholly clean, for it usually retains remnants of old body paint, feathers glued on, and the like—the sort of things regarded as dirt by civilized people. Babies at the breast are the cleanest part of the population, for they are washed without delay as soon as they are dirty.

The oral cavity is cleansed with the index and middle fingers and rinsed with sand. They never clean their fingernails.

[857] When at most three years old the Rāmkō'kamekra boys and girls know how to swim and dive. I observed that the Krahō', Kre'pu'mkateye, and the Timbira of Araparytūa were all good swimmers, and the same has been reported of the Pōrekamekra.^m On the other hand, I had a different impression of the Krikati, who do not live along running watercourses and of whom I suspect at least some are unable to swim. At all events they manifested a striking repugnance to deep water, as I noted repeatedly when they accompanied me from their village to Porto Franco on the Tocantins. At the Ribeirão da Aldea, whose wooded bank was somewhat more than knee-deep under water, while in midstream the water of the brook did not extend beyond my saddle, these Indians cut off sticks to take soundings ahead of them, and I had long reached the opposite bank when I still heard them splashing behind me and excitedly shouting at one another. They talked of the Ribeirão dos Arraiaes, which is 20 m. wide and 1½ deep, as though it were an insurmountable obstacle; and the successful crossing took an eternity, for each of the women had to be led across by two men. Still more amusing was the passage of the shallow, but swift streamlet known as Lageado in a canoe belonging to a Neobrazilian. At first no one ventured to step into it, and when the first hero hesitantly and diffidently succumbed to my mockery, his wife kept singing in a booming voice on the bank till she saw him safely on land.

356 The dwellings are in general tolerably cleanly. Every self-respecting woman will sweep her house and the space before it at least once a day—even several times if the offals after a meal require it. The brooms are made of the inflorescence of the
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[37] *amahy* (*Euterpe* sp.) or the bacaba palm (*Oenocarpus* sp.), or a bundle of mallow

^m Pohl, Reise, 2:200 f.

851 upon the age class trotted toward Patkwé's house, humming "like humming
846 birds," and there a whole meat pie was distributed among them. Meanwhile Patkwé's husband had also abandoned the partitioned space of seclusion, put on his earplugs once more, and had himself painted with urucú. When the rópama still humming as before, ran back, one of the oldest Indians came to meet them dancing, howling like a steppe fox, and bashfully slinking from one side to another. As a steppe fox always visits an abandoned camp site in search of food remnants, so the old man was looking for the residue at Patkwé's house.

A ceremony of such complexity, however, takes place only when the first child is born. On the same day another woman, who had already given birth to a number of children, was discharged from her retreat. All she did was to send a meat pie via her brother to the council assembled in the plaza.

851 When Kapértuk's wife had been delivered of a little girl, his sister, Mikwé'i,
[551] took her in her arms and carried her to the aunt's matrilineal home, thereby indi-
846 cating that she would transfer her names to the infant. Then Kapértuk's and Mikwé'i's maternal uncle went to hunt a deer, which he turned over to his niece. The meat she prepared was partaken of by all the inmates of the matrilineal home of Kapértuk's wife, except herself and her husband. Unprepared slices of this game must not be distributed in other dwellings lest the hunter lose his luck, growing lazy and sleepy (čukaká). For the same reason he must not throw his booty on the floor when he gets home, but must deposit it with caution.

[825] After his seclusion an infant's father goes on a hunting trip in order to kill an anteat-
er of the smaller species (*Myrmecophaga tetradactyla*), which is said to "rear its children like a human being" by carrying them around on its back.

852 As soon as the child has its change of hair, the furrow is cut round its head.
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Not until the close of seclusion does the mother indulge in domestic chores, and even then only in part because during the first months she hardly lets go of her infant. In leaving the house she turns it over to her own mother or another female housemate. A little girl is likely to spend considerable time at a paternal aunt's—even if she should not be the one from whom she acquires her names. This bond between little girls and their paternal aunts often is of great intimacy, being even more striking than the corresponding tie between a boy and his maternal uncle, which manifests itself later and especially in ceremonial. This uncle certainly pays no attention to a nursing's care.

853 So long as the mother maintains continence, the child is supposed to grow apace.
856 For this reason many women abstain from marital congress for months, allowing the hair around their temples to grow, but immediately clipping it after the first postnatal cohabitation. This obligatory continence is by no means to every husband's taste, and a fantastic tale of suicide—relegated, it is true, to the days of long ago—is told. On the plea that their child was still too small a woman denied her husband access for many months. He had himself, as well as the nephew to whom he had transferred his names, decorated and took the boy into the steppe. There he pretended to hunt falcons, kindled a fire around himself and the boy, causing both to perish.

INFANCY

853 The nursing period lasts about two years. The mother gives suck as often as the child desires it, kinswomen being glad to help so far as they are able. The mother teaches her child to eat cooked food by chewing it and then placing it in the infant's mouth.

854 As soon as the child is able to sit, the mother carries it straddling her left hip

Nimuendajá: The Eastern Timbira

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854 while holding it with her left arm (pl. 22, a). Among the Ramkô'kamekra I have never seen carrying bands used, yet they probably were formerly in vogue, for Ribeiro expressly states: "Carregam ellas os seus filhos menores ás costas, pendurados em tipoias ou tiras largas feitas de palha de buritý."²⁰⁰ That is, they followed the present custom of the Šerénte and Kayapó instead of the Apinayé custom of wearing girdles.²⁰¹ Pohl describes the carrying bands of the Pôrekamekra: "In order to carry their children, who are nursed until their fifth year, in comfort, the women use shoulder-bands two inches in width [i.e., strikingly narrow!], which are plaited of palm leaves, and on the chest as well as the back there are suspended some twenty cords with the above-mentioned bead-like seeds [*Scleria flagellum*]. Into this band the child is set so that its feet clasp the mother's body." The same carrying band he notes among the Krahô': "I obtained one of the above-mentioned children's carrying-bands, such as I found here too in use by all the women."²⁰²

854 286 I, too, have seen carrying bands among the Krikatí and Pukóbye, but they were plaited of cotton, not palm grass, and were in part provided with ornaments in relief. The Ramkô'kamekra and Apá'nyekra also have such cotton sashes (pl. 11, a, b), but today at least they serve only as ceremonial decoration of the precentresses. Here the plaitwork is always plain, with huge cotton tassels depending from the cords of *Scleria* beads. The mode of manufacture varies. Either the band is manufactured in the plaiting frame with only a number of little sticks inserted between the warp strands; or the maker slings a cipó hoop round her knees (pl. 6, a-c). Concerning a similar specimen seen among the Kre'pu'mkatéye I do not know whether it served as a carrying-band or as a ceremonial decoration. The Krikatí, Pukóbye, and Kre'pu'mkatéye substitute deer hoofs for the *Scleria* cords.

From the Suyá, Von den Steinen obtained a quite similar children's carrying girdle of cotton, about 7 cm. wide and plaited all over with lozenge designs, but it had only two loosely encircling corded rings instead of the pendants.

The Krikatí and the Pukóbye also have some wide cotton carrying slings in two-strand twining technique (Doppelfadengeflecht), which, like the cotton hammocks of the same make, are all traded in from the neighboring Guajajara.

854 Among the Ramkô'kamekra it is exclusively the mother's business—or occasionally that of kinswomen relieving her—to tend the infants. A man will indeed play with his child and lay it beside him on his platform bed in the daytime, but if it gets soiled he almost always calls the mother to do the cleaning.

All the women and girls I knew were without exception glad to devote themselves to children. As soon as a little one begins to stand erect, the women attempt to teach it rhythmic dance movements to accompany their singing, and it is very droll to see the infants commence dancing after a fashion as soon as their mothers stand them upright and strike up a tune.

NAMES

551 The principle of name transmission and its connection with social units have already been described (p. 77 ff.).

²⁰⁰ Ribeiro, *Memoria*, § 12.

²⁰¹ Nimuendajá, *The Apinayé*, 105, 106.

²⁰² Pohl, *Reise*, 2:193, 215. "Um ihre Kinder, welche bis zum fünften Jahr gesaugt werden, bequem tragen zu können bedienen sich die Weiber zu diesem Zweck bestimmter Achselbänder. Selbe sind zwei Zoll breit, aus Palmblättern geflochten und an der Brustseite wie auf dem Rücken hängen bei 20 Schnüre mit den oben erwähnten perlenartigen Samenkörnern. In diese Binde wird das Kind gesetzt, so zwar, daß dessen Füße den Leib der Mutter umschlingen. . . . Auch eines der oben erwähnten Kindertragbänder, welche ich hier ebenfalls bey allen Weibern sah, brachte ich an mich. . ."

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CHILDREN IN ARMS